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BOOK REVIEWS.

HUMAN NATURE AND ITS REMAKING. By William Ernest Hocking, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy in Harvard University. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1918. Pp. xxvi, 434.

This is an instructive and stimulating book abounding in wide learning, genial wisdom, and shrewd insights, set forth in unusually clear, graceful and forceful English.

The title suggests a study in social psychology, and so it is. But this is auxiliary to the chief concern, which is with religion. The volume is the outcome of lectures delivered in 1916 before the School of Religion at Yale University.

The standpoint is frankly, that of the Neo-Hegelian absolutism of the general type of Bosanquet and Royce. But its method is much more effective than the procedure of most teachers of absolutism. It does not stake the case of the absolute on a mathematical or logical theorem. The concreteness of the "Concrete Universal" shall be exhibited. Our instincts shall declare it. There shall be no language where its voice is not heard. This is, of course, the thesis of all absolutism. But most attempts, from Hegel on, to exhibit its detail have ended in appeals to the principle of logical contradiction, even while professing to find the unique character of the absolute in Art, in "Sentience," or in Religion. This is not to say that Professor Hocking's method avoids all of the ancient difficulties of absolutism. On the contrary it means that it confronts them and grapples with them at points where they are most acute and where others have avoided them.

The "original" "primitive" human nature, which is to be remade is accepted "for the sake of the argument as a group of instincts." The most general form of the remaking agency is Conscience. And this agency, while it may appear now as *vox naturæ*, now as *vox familiæ*, or *vox populi*, is always at bottom *vox Dei*.

At the outset the argument encounters the old question, is this agency of remaking a part of "original" human nature or is it outside and independent of it? This antithesis appears early in the argument where Professor Hocking says (p. 99), "My own view is that conscience stands outside the instinctive life of man

not as something separate, but as an awareness of the success or failure of that life in maintaining its status and its growth." On the other hand, one of the distinctive and most important features of the volume is the emphasis placed on the existence of a pervasive *central instinct*, best, but imperfectly, described as "the will to power." Here conscience appears (p. 115 and elsewhere) as the conflict of the specific peripheral instincts with this central instinct. Here the remaking agency is as instinctive as the material to be remade.

Human life is then the remaking and sublimation of specific instincts by the central instinct of "the will to power" which seeks its realization in nature, society, and art, but finds it completely in religion. Religion alone "is the satisfaction of the whole will, the will to power in its inclusive form." "In religion the will of man seeks direct union with the simple center of power which is beyond and within the world as the will of the world."

The account of the transformation of instinct through society, art, and Christianity betrays a rich acquaintance with material and a fertile power of interpretation. In reading this volume as in reading others written from the same standpoint, *e.g.*, Bosanquet's logic, so long as the exposition is occupied with specific, scientific or social problems the non-absolutist reader finds himself jotting the margin with approving and admiring comments. But when the attempt begins to connect up scientific procedure with the absolute, or to portray the sort of remaking of instincts required by the absolute, the character of the marginal notes changes. The notes are now full of such interrogations as the following: If religion provides a direct and adequate supernatural, super-social, super-artistic realization of "the will to power" why retain the indirect and inadequate forms? What is the relation of the direct and adequate to the indirect and inadequate forms of realization? What is the content of this direct and adequate realization? Or, must we here be frankly mystics? Again, if access to the direct and adequate source of power must be affected by that source itself, by "The Divine Aggression" (Chaps. 44-46), does the divine attack always succeed? If not, why not? If so, what is the evidence? May not "the will to power" after all mean just the capacity which we have for conceiving a better state of nature, art, or society than the present and of taking steps to bring it to pass? And may not the recognition and celebration of this capacity, and devotion to its oper-

ation, be truly religious? And how (p. 415) does this conception "cut us off from the higher reaches of sympathy" or from the vision of "an endlessly progressive humanity"? Are not these the very essence of such a religion?

Professor Hocking is clearly aware of the fundamental social danger of the conception of absolutism, namely, that in the hands of any but the most sophisticated expert the finality and authority of the absolute is certain to be imputed to specific and finite social orders and programs with political and religious autocracy as the outcome. He recognizes that it puts a severe strain on human nature to ask it to refrain from justifying the detail of its procedure by its ideal. Nevertheless we must refrain; we must see (p. 315) that "the detail of the law like the detail of science has to be built with the aid of pragmatic considerations" of "social expediency. . . . Religion must content itself with giving to these pragmatic considerations their final meaning." Again our margin asks, what is the content of this "final" meaning? and what is its relation to the "pragmatic" meanings? Is it merely additive? Is there no organic relationship?

These questions may exhaust the patience of the author as they do our allotted space for this notice. He may refer us to the final chapter on "The Last Fact" which proclaims that the content of this final meaning cannot be rendered conceptually even by philosophy. In it meaning and fact are one and must be directly and uniquely experienced by the individual. Still the questions haunt us.

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SOME SUGGESTIONS IN ETHICS. By Bernard Bosanquet, D.C.L., L.L.D., Fellow of the British Academy. London: Macmillan and Company; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918. Pp. viii, 248. Price, 6s. net.

Idealistic philosophy has for some years been somewhat heavily in debt for a directly ethical treatment of the problem of good and evil. This is probably to be explained by its preoccupation with metaphysical problems on the one hand, social and political on the other. Meantime the lead which it may be said to have established by the publication of Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* has been taken out of its hands by more eclectic philosophies such as that represented by Dr. Rashdall's *Theory of Good and Evil* and by